

Moving Panoramas c. 1800 to 1840: The Spaces of Nineteenth-Century Picture-Going

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In nineteenth-century Britain, the cornucopia of new visual and optical media was most likely to be habitually experienced as part of an exhibition, lecture, performance, demonstration, fair, *conversazione*, pleasure garden, or show. Encouraged by urbanization and changes in transportation, education, and leisure patterns, the regular and widespread provision of exhibitions and shows became a defining characteristic of nineteenth-century cultural life. Picture-going, in all its variety, became a national pastime. Exhibitions of visual media took place in towns and cities across Britain, and not only in mechanics' and literary institutes, theatres, and other large exhibition spaces, but in music halls, town halls, workhouses, schools, and church halls. Such shows also spilled out into the streets and fairgrounds, whether through the sensationalist peepshows of the penny gaff, the optical trickery of fairground ghost shows, or the cries of itinerant exhibitors of microscopes and telescopes. However, there remain large gaps in our knowledge of the experiences of visual and optical media and their presence in everyday life. At what type of venue and event could they be found? For what educational, ideological, and amusement purposes were they employed? How did these shows impact across a range of population centres and their varied communities? Without a more nuanced and detailed understanding of when, where, how, and in what volume they were experienced, it is difficult to make a case for the importance of these visual and optical forms in giving individuals and audiences not only amusement but an understanding of themselves and the modern world around them.

This article argues that the development of picture-going, as a series of overlapping, substantive industries and as popular habit, can best be demonstrated by mapping the heterogeneity and volume of relevant exhibitions. More particularly, it contends that this can only be achieved by elaborating the world beyond those celebrated metropolitan shows which have been the focus of most existing scholarship. The bulk of this article

is a study of the exhibition of moving panoramas in the south-west of England from c. 1800 to 1840.¹ Its regional focus seeks to exemplify the idea that where an exhibition took place was a determining factor not only in how it took place, but the meanings it produced and the way it was experienced by audiences. Importantly though, this contention does not simply imply a complete change of focus from the metropolis to the provinces, or from urban to rural spaces. Rather, there is a need to destabilize distinctions such as these, acknowledging that each locality and venue in which picture-going took place tended to define questions of centre and periphery quite differently. Places are obviously never just physical spaces, but are the product of social meanings and demographics, and are therefore always inflected by cultural, institutional, and communal predispositions, many of which are shared, but some of which conflict. The exhibition of moving panoramas demonstrates that the nature of visual shows on offer varied significantly depending on the characteristics of a particular town or city; the meaning and strategies of a performance also varied depending upon the particular type of venue or event; and all of these alternative understandings of place impacted upon the expectations and knowledges brought independently by audiences to the display or performance.

The last decade or so has seen a resurgent critical interest in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century visuality, and with the devices, technologies, and shows that fostered the period's fascination with the boundaries between the visible and invisible, imagination and reality, the material and ideal. Isobel Armstrong, for example, has brilliantly demonstrated that the modernity of the period was itself often characterized in terms of the 'the status of the image, the nature of mediation (or bringing about of a changed state), and the problem of knowledge and perceptual

¹ This article derives from a large AHRC-funded project, 'Moving and Projected-Image Entertainment in the South-West 1840–1914', undertaken by Joe Kember, Jill Sullivan, Ros Leveridge, and myself. The introduction to this article draws on the jointly written chapter 1 of our forthcoming *Picture-Going: Popular Visual and Optical Shows in the South-West 1820–1914*.

A number of abbreviations are used for newspapers throughout this article, listed as follows: *BC*, *Bath Chronicle*; *BM*, *Bristol Mercury*; *DIPSG*, *Devonport Independent and Plymouth and Stonehouse Gazette*; *EPG*, *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*; *NDJ*, *North Devon Journal*; *PDWJ*, *Plymouth and Devonport Weekly Journal*; *RCG*, *Royal Cornwall Gazette*; *TEFP*, *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*.

certainty'.² Yet while existing studies of nineteenth-century visual culture have done much to historicize modes of vision and visibility, they have only been able to elaborate in limited detail the landscape of visual and optical shows. This is partly due to the fact that the necessary archives, principally newspapers, have been difficult to access and work through unless digitized, but also because popular exhibition practices, as such, have fallen at the edges of different disciplinary concerns. There has, instead, been a powerful implicit tendency to consider 'The Audience' as a single unified body and spectatorship as if it were an inalterable feature or quality shared transparently within it. Typical of this is Jonathan Crary's influential and much-anthologized *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth-Century* (1992). Following in the path of Walter Benjamin, Crary links new visual technologies with changes in the modern sensorium, arguing that they helped to discipline subjectivity to the rhythms of industrialization. This approach opens up many fertile questions. However, in this volume, Crary demonstrates little interest in the specificities of actual exhibitions and viewing experiences and the ways they might complicate his thesis. The broader term, 'picture-going', by contrast, signifies first and foremost an action and an experience, delimited on each occasion by specific circumstances, and deliberately evoking something of the excitement and speculation generated by attending a show.³

Research concerning picture-going, detailed by more grounded evidence concerning exhibitions and their audiences, thus presents an opportunity to define terms such as 'visibility' and 'modernity' dynamically and openly, embracing the ambivalences of such terms, and acknowledging that they are not only aligned with hegemonic cultural forces. This approach also counters other academic definitions, inspired especially by the work of Georg Simmel and Benjamin, of a specifically *urban* modernity as the single master paradigm explaining the form and functions of exhibitions. Neatly summarized by film scholars, Daniel Biltereyst, Richard Maltby, and Phillippe Meers,

the modernity thesis proposed that disruptive economic, social and cultural effects of urbanization and industrialization created a state of constant sensory change, nervous stimula-

² Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds: Glass Culture and the Imagination 1830–1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 254.

³ The term 'picture-going' derives from many collective discussions with the research team over the course of the AHRC project.

tion, feverish stress, speed and bodily peril, and that cinema both reflected this state and was a consequence of it, promoting a particular gaze or form of perception.⁴

By contrast with this definition of a specialized mode of perception geared especially to the dynamics of shock and spectacular display, recent work concerning varied exhibition cultures, including early film, has uncovered a series of more sedate and comforting pleasures, suggesting that modern media drew upon a much wider range of visual and cognitive regimes, and fully participated in modernity's repackaging of more traditional social forms.⁵

Especially significant to our current understanding of audiences' ambivalent and conjoined encounter with both 'the modern' and different modes of visibility has been the growing body of work on nineteenth-century 'popular science'.⁶ Recent scholarship has sought to elaborate the variegated networks and spaces of exhibition in order to demonstrate the pervasive yet heterogeneous ways 'popular science' was disseminated. Aileen Fyfe and Bernard Lightman's collection, *Science in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century Sites and Experiences*, is exemplary in its attempt to shift attention towards new readings of 'the roles of sites and experiences'.⁷ With-

⁴ Daniel Biltereyst, Richard Maltby, and Philippe Meers, 'Cinema, Audiences, and Modernity: An Introduction', in Daniel Biltereyst, Richard Maltby, and Philippe Meers, *Cinema, Audiences, and Modernity: New Perspectives on European Cinema History* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 1–16 (pp. 3–4).

⁵ For this perspective in early film studies, see, especially, Charles Musser, 'A Cinema of Contemplation, a Cinema of Discernment: Spectatorship, Intertextuality and Attractions in the 1890s', in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, ed. by Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), pp. 159–79; Joe Kember, *Marketing Modernity: Victorian Popular Shows and Early Cinema* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2009), pp. 13–40.

⁶ Examples include Ralph O'Connor, *The Earth on Show: Fossils and the Poetics of Popular Science, 1802–1856* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Bernard Lightman, *Victorian Popularizers of Science: Designing Nature for New Audiences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Joe Kember, John Plunkett, and Jill Sullivan, *Popular Exhibitions, Science and Showmanship, 1840–1910* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012).

⁷ Aileen Fyfe and Bernard Lightman, 'Science in the Marketplace: An Introduction', in *Science in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century Sites and Experiences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 2–13. See also *Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Science*, ed. by David N. Livingstone and Charles Withers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Diarmuid Finnegan, 'The Spatial Turn: Geograph-

in early film studies, the past ten years has similarly seen a wave of micro-historical work, now designated as part of the ‘new cinema history’, which has been addressing the experience of film-going within specific national and regional contexts, extending down to case studies of small towns and individual picture houses; within specific audience groups, identified variously by issues of class, gender, racial, ethnic, and sexual identity.⁸ More broadly, as Richard Maltby has argued of attendance at film shows, the qualities of this experience ‘were place-specific and shaped by the contingencies of life in the family, the workplace, the neighbourhood, and the community’.⁹ Nineteenth-century theatre historians have also demonstrated the importance of local references, actors, and settings. Jill Sullivan, for example, has argued that in the annual pantomimes that were so crucial to the commercial survival of most nineteenth-century theatres ‘references to local issues, traditions, and the promoted status of theatres, managers, authors, and location all formed a part of the theatre-going experience’.¹⁰

ical Approaches in the History of Science’, *Journal of the History of Biology*, 41 (2008), 369–88.

⁸ For a full excavation of the ‘new cinema history’, see, especially, Kate Bowles and others, *The New Cinema History: A Guide* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011). Pertinent recent studies of European and American film exhibition, including early film shows, include: *Going to the Movies: Hollywood and the Social Experience of Cinema*, ed. by Richard Maltby, Melvyn Stokes, and Richard Allen (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007); *Hollywood in the Neighborhood: Historical Case Studies of Local Moviegoing*, ed. by K. H. Fuller-Seeley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Paul S. Moore, *Now Playing: Early Moviegoing and the Regulation of Fun* (New York: SUNY Press, 2008); *Cinema, Audiences and Modernity*, ed. by Biltereyst, Maltby, and Meers. See also *The London Project*, <<http://londonfilm.bbk.ac.uk/>>; Luke McKernan, ‘Diverting Time: London’s Cinemas and their Audiences’, *London Journal*, 32 (2007), 125–44; Jon Burrows, ‘Penny Pleasures: Film Exhibition in London during the Nickelodeon Era 1906–1914’, *Film History*, 16 (2004), 66–91; Trevor Griffiths, *The Cinema and Cinema-Going in Scotland, 1896–1950* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

⁹ Richard Maltby, ‘New Cinema Histories’, in *Explorations of New Cinema History: Approaches and Case Studies*, ed. by Daniel Biltereyst, Richard Maltby, and Philippe Meers (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 3–40 (p. 9).

¹⁰ Jill Sullivan, *The Politics of the Pantomime: Regional Identity in the Theatre, 1860–1900* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2011), p. 10. See also Paul Maloney, *Scotland and the Music Hall, 1850–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University

The ‘spatial turn’, evident across a range of disciplines, which is re-framing our broad understanding of science, film, and visual cultures through accounts of their exhibition and audience practices, has encouraged a move towards local and regional analysis. Recovering the ecologies of exhibition cultures has gone hand in hand with a burgeoning number of case studies of particular locales, not simply because this provides the necessary focus for teasing out the multiple dynamics of a performance event, but because, in so doing, it becomes possible to ask more fundamental questions about the nature of picture-going itself. Thus, a key element of recent studies of ‘popular science’ has been a move towards an exploration of the provision of lectures, demonstrations, and exhibitions in British provincial towns and cities.¹¹ In addition to providing confirmation of just how pervasive the provision of scientific spectacles was, this work has produced a much more complex national picture than that of a simple migration of metropolitan exhibition forms to the provinces. Moreover, as Diarmuid Finnegan has argued, in the historical geography of nineteenth-century science, local, regional, national, and international spaces should not be regarded as separate frames of analysis:

It is nevertheless important to recognise that different scales of analysis cannot be presumed to be distinct and stable. Rather, they may be better thought of as intertwined in ways that require close investigation. Scaling up from a local or regional account of science to the transnational and global need not entail a move away from the local or regional. ‘Big science’ might be approached not as a single and monolithic entity uniformly stretched across global space but rather as a dynamic conglomeration of practices, materials and people differently assembled in different places and relying on the translation and transformation — more than straightforward

Press, 2003); and the AHRC-funded *Mapping Performance Culture: Nottingham 1857–1867* <<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/mapmoment/>> [accessed 29 October 2013].

¹¹ Julia Adelman, *Communities of Science in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, *Science and Culture in the Nineteenth Century*, 10 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009); Diarmuid A. Finnegan, *Natural History Societies and Civic Culture in Victorian Scotland*, *Science and Culture in the Nineteenth Century*, 9 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009); Simon Naylor, *Regionalizing Science: Placing Knowledges in Victorian England*, *Science and Culture in the Nineteenth Century*, 11 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2010).

diffusion — of data and theories. The implications of this are that the local and regional are not fixed points or bounded territories but rather instantiations of wider networks and flows. ('The Spatial Turn', pp. 384–85)

This interplay between local, regional, national, and international also applies to the exhibition of moving panoramas. Showman and lecturers who toured the provinces after long runs in London were certainly instrumental in the development of a nascent entertainment industry, even helping to foster a national identity based on connecting audiences to specific causes, events, or individuals, but it was equally the case that the specific cultural and social demographics of locales — its individuals, institutions, and venues — impacted upon the pattern of panorama exhibitions that were put on, as well as the success (or not) of individual shows.

While the encounter between audience and show was always locally embodied, it is notable that many visual entertainments dealt with subject matter that was global and imperial, whether it was a lantern lecture promoting missionary work in Africa or a moving panorama of the Indian Mutiny. Moving panoramas were an important means of constituting an imagined community that fused the local with the global and imperial, integrating a globalized modernity into everyday life. Benedict Anderson has famously argued for the role of print culture in creating the nation as an imagined community: yet Anderson's claim that the newspaper is the principal provider of homogeneous, empty time, whereby its readers internalize and connect with the simultaneous yet disparate events found on any one page, needs to be revised in that it is equally true of the panorama and other popular shows.¹² At a time of uneven literacy, the moving panorama fulfilled the same function through offering an experience of inhabiting a simultaneity of spaces. Thus, in a well-known short story published in April 1850 in *Household Words*, Dickens recounts the exploits of an enthusiastic panoramic traveller, Mr Booley, who is able to travel the globe without ever being buffeted by the physical hardships of travelling:

Mr Booley's powers of endurance are wonderful. All climates are alike to him. Nothing exhausts him; no alternations of heat and cold appear to have the least effect upon his hardy frame. His capacity of travelling, day and night, for thousands of miles, has never been approached by any traveller of

¹² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006).

whom we have any knowledge through the help of books. An intelligent Englishman may have occasionally pointed out to him objects and scenes of interest; but otherwise he has travelled alone and unattended.¹³

Mr Booley is always in two places at once: a viewer in London or Bristol or Barnstaple but also a virtual visitor to New Zealand, Australia, the Arctic, and India. His picture-going embodies the manner in which, through the moving panorama, the nineteenth-century ‘local’, ‘regional’, and ‘provincial’ were themselves being profoundly reinvented to encompass global spaces.

Nineteenth-century panorama showmen were themselves attuned to the fact that the meaning and success of each exhibition depended on the specific, local encounter between the exhibition and its audience; that they were so conscious, and sometimes sought to take advantage of it, underscores the organic nature of a spatial methodology. For example, an article on panoramas in the *Birmingham Daily Post* from 1889, which described their production process of the most spectacular scenes and the range of special effects used, demonstrates that even these set-piece extravaganzas had to be grounded in a detailed realism, precisely because it was subject to the local knowledge of their audiences:

The representation of the Naval Review at Spithead takes quite ten minutes to prepare for. Every vessel is a set piece, and has to be put in position; and here it may be said that there is not one of these mimic warships which will not bear a critical examination through an opera glass by any man-of-war’s-man, for they have been made to scale after drawings at the Admiralty, and rigged by a practical seaman. Nothing less truthful would serve when the panorama paid a visit to Portsmouth or Plymouth: there would else be an inextinguishable uproar in the house.¹⁴

The hyper-similitude of the naval scene is grounded in the textual authority of engravings from the Admiralty but it is also spatially conditioned. What was ‘realistic’ in Plymouth or Portsmouth was not the same as Edinburgh or Manchester. Similarly, the touring panoramas and lantern lectures of picturesque Scotland or Ireland (of which there were many) must

¹³ Charles Dickens, ‘Some Account of an Extraordinary Traveller’, *Household Words*, 20 April 1850, p. 77.

¹⁴ ‘Behind the Scenes at a Panorama’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 5 January 1889, p. 4.

have had a different meaning when exhibited in the south-west as opposed to Glasgow or Dublin.

A regional study of the moving panorama, detailed through mapping its early exhibition in the south-west c. 1800 to 1840, demonstrates the value of a spatial approach. The moving panorama, the dominant exhibition mode from around the 1820s, was, as Errki Huhtamo has observed, ‘always a nomadic medium’.¹⁵ Yet, with the notable exception of Huhtamo, most studies have focused on prominent metropolitan shows. They have downplayed its role at the forefront of large-scale touring shows in the early nineteenth century, and correspondingly flattened both the audience’s picture-going experience and its overall cultural impact.¹⁶ Provincial exhibition was fundamental to the commercial and aesthetic evolution of the moving panorama: the business model of the most successful showmen during the 1820s and 1830s was of extended runs with multiple canvases as they moved slowly across a region. The scale of their operations was remarkable. Our regional study of the south-west reveals that while the majority of moving panorama exhibitions were concentrated in the urban centres of Exeter, Plymouth, and Bristol, they also reached smaller towns in Devon, Somerset, and Cornwall.

One key benefit of a regional study, as opposed to a more narrowly focused micro-history, is that it provides a representative picture of variations, as well as similarities, between local practices, which enables the charting of the uneven and overlapping patterns of networks and flows at work. Mapping three different urban centres — Exeter, Bristol, and Plymouth — alongside smaller towns creates the ability to make comparative judgements regarding the impact of different types of location on the number and type of moving panorama found there. As a region, the

¹⁵ Errki Huhtamo, ‘Peristrepheic Pleasures: On the Origins of the Moving Panorama’, in *Allegories of Communication: Intermedial Concerns from the Cinema to the Digital*, ed. by John Fullerton and Jan Olsson (New Barnet: Libbey, 2004), pp. 215–48.

¹⁶ The most extensive treatment of the moving panorama is Errki Huhtamo’s *Illusions in Motion: Media Archaeology of the Moving Panorama and Related Spectacles* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012). Other texts include Richard Altick, *The Shows of London* (Boston: Belknap Press, 1978); Kevin Rockett and Emer Rockett, *Magic Lantern, Panorama and Moving Picture Shows in Ireland, 1786–1909* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011); Alison Byerly, ‘“A Prodigious Map Beneath His Feet”: Virtual Travel and the Panoramic Perspective’, *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 29 (2007), 151–68; Bernard Comment, *The Panorama* (London: Reaktion, 2004); Denise Blake Oleksijczuk, *First Panoramas: Visions of British Imperialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

south-west is notable for its heterogeneity. Bristol, with a population of 99,151 in 1821 was a significant urban centre often looking to London as a comparator city. In contrast, while Exeter and Plymouth were the most populous centres in Devon during this period (in 1821, their respective populations were 29,977 and 61,212), these two cities were part of a predominantly rural area that, particularly on the historiographical map, is a long way from the emergent industrial, working-class centres of northern England and the Midlands, areas which, together with London, have received the most scholarly attention in terms of both Victorian popular entertainment and early film. The ‘provinciality’ of Plymouth and Exeter is intended to demonstrate that, while seemingly a long way from the metropolitan centre of the exhibition industry, these cities still had a thriving culture of shows and lectures. It is important to emphasize though that Plymouth and Exeter were equally distinct from each other and this ‘provincial’ designation was itself subject to change over time due to factors such as the reaching of the railways and telegraph into different locales of Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall, and the consequent national and regional networking this created.

A regional study allows variegated results produced by individual locations to be considered as a whole, giving what Maltby has described as ‘the capacity for comparison, aggregation, and scaling’ (*New Cinema Histories*, p. 13). Collectivizing the findings helps to build a national picture of optical shows, creating a model that is not monolithic but derives its richness and complexity from the diversity and multiplicity of locations it encompasses. In practice, exhibition and performance norms were never a purely local consideration; indeed, one key strength of a regional study is its capacity to link the experience of local audiences to national and global precedents. The moving panorama demonstrates that the exhibition of optical media was a mass practice, providing a compelling arena in which specific local audiences encountered not only modern media and exhibitions, but also the modern world itself, inflected by varied national, global, and imperial perspectives.

The birth of an industry

As is well known, the panorama was patented by the Irish painter Robert Barker on 17 June 1787; his patent conceived it as a large circular canvas exhibited in a darkened interior. After initially exhibiting in Edinburgh, Barker was eventually able to open his rotunda in Leicester Square on 25

May 1793. (In 1801, Thomas Edward Barker, son of Robert, set up a rival rotunda on the Strand.) Large circular panoramas, housed in permanent, purpose-built rotundas, had undoubted benefits in that their architectural features could significantly augment the visual and sensory spectacle. The Leicester Square rotunda, and subsequently the Regent's Park Colosseum (opened in 1829), enjoyed an established position as must-see sites for both metropolitan inhabitants and visitors; yet as static exhibitions, and expensive ones at that, there was an inherent limit to their appeal. The success of the early panorama exhibitions in London did nonetheless indicate the lucrative prospects for entrepreneurial exhibitors if they were able to reach the growing audiences in provincial towns and cities. Touring panoramas fitfully emerged as the dominant exhibition norm: crucially though, they were part of a more general expansion of touring entertainments. Improved transport links and the increasing availability of materials meant that touring theatres and circuses, which often built their own temporary exhibition structures, similarly became much more common during the first decades of the nineteenth century.¹⁷

It would be the 1820s before panoramas became a regular presence in the provinces. Nonetheless, the first touring shows appeared very quickly. In July 1796, Robert Dodd's 100-foot panorama of the fleet at Spithead and the conflagration of the warship *HMS Boyne*, which had been exhibiting at Spring Gardens, London, transferred to the Assembly Rooms, Norwich, where it was said to be the 'first ever presented for public inspection outside of London'.¹⁸ The sparseness of newspaper coverage makes it difficult to track its full movements, but it was subsequently exhibited at Ipswich, Great Yarmouth, and Edinburgh, reaching the latter in December 1796 before continuing a meandering tour across Britain, definitely exhibiting at Birmingham (October 1798), Newcastle (May 1799), Glasgow (January 1801), and probably many other places.¹⁹

Practically, it would have been a logistical challenge to tour large, circular panoramas. The growth of touring panorama exhibitions, both in London and the provinces, thus went hand in hand with the development of visual and display formats that, initially, were either semicircular canvases or simply extremely large tableaux. For all its touted spectacle, a

¹⁷ Jacqueline Harrop, *Victorian Portable Theatres* (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1989), p. 6.

¹⁸ 'The Panorama', *Norfolk Chronicle*, 16 July 1796, p. 2.

¹⁹ 'Grand and Improved Panorama', *Caledonian Mercury*, 17 December 1796, p. 1; 'Panorama', *Birmingham Gazette*, 1 October 1798, p. 3; 'The Panorama', *Newcastle Courant*, 25 May 1799, p. 4; 'At Glasgow', *Caledonian Mercury*, 8 January 1801, p. 3.

touring panorama had to fit into the exhibition spaces available, often assembly rooms, or else be displayed using purpose-built but temporary accommodation. When Dodd's aforementioned panorama of the Fleet at Spithead was exhibited at Birmingham, for example, adverts trumpeted that there was a large building especially erected for the purpose in Union Street: 'So Grand a Spectacle will probably never be offered to the Inhabitants of this Town again, the Expense of Building for its Reception, being sufficient to deter a person, less spirited from a Proprietor, from such an undertaking.'²⁰ Similarly, when Naismith and Cooper's Panorama of London was exhibited in Edinburgh in 1797, it was at a temporary building opposite New College.²¹ Particularly outside London, the desire for purpose-built spaces held back panorama exhibitions as they were attendant with practical difficulties as well as high overhead costs. That in Glasgow exhibiting Dodd's panorama was destroyed by high winds in January 1801.²²

There was an obvious need for a portable visual format that retained the scale of the panorama. The 'moving' panorama thus emerged. It was movable in two equally important ways. Firstly, the canvas 'moved' and consisted of interconnected individual tableaux. Showing individual tableaux sequentially required far less exhibition space than a full, circular panorama. As such, these portable panoramas were able to be accommodated within existing exhibition spaces, whether in London or the provinces. The first 'moving panoramas' dated by Richard Altick are features within pantomimes at Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, and Covent Garden in December 1800, with others subsequently being incorporated into a number of pantomimes at the Lyceum and Sadler's Wells.²³ There is, however, at least one potential precursor. The first panorama to claim 'moving' effects appeared in the fashionable environs of Bath in 13 April 1797. The exhibition was yet another celebration of British naval prowess, portraying its victory against the Spanish at the Battle of Cape Vincent in February of the same year. Its principal self-proclaimed appeal was its moving pictures:

²⁰ 'Panorama', *Birmingham Gazette*, 1 October 1798, p. 3.

²¹ 'Panorama', *Caledonian Mercury*, 10 July 1797, p. 1.

²² 'Panorama', *Caledonian Mercury*, 8 January 1801, p. 3.

²³ For example, a 'moving panorama' of the Battle of Trafalgar was advertised in the Lyceum on 20 May 1813; Sadler's Wells also had a moving panorama of 'Moscow in Flames' at the same time; 'Lyceum', *Morning Post*, 20 May 1813, p. 2; 'Another Change of Performance: Sadler's Wells', *Morning Chronicle*, 5 May 1817, p. 3. On the first moving panoramas, see Altick, pp. 198–205.

The whole is made to appear as large and in every respect the same as real. What gives an advantage to the Exhibition, above every other, is, the whole scene is in motion and the Vessels not only change their situation, but also their position — consequently the most perfect representation of Nature.²⁴

It is impossible to tell exactly how this panorama ‘moved’; it may be that it was only the vessels that moved against a fixed painted backdrop, an effect that had been previously achieved in De Louthembourg’s *Eidophusikon*. Nonetheless, advertisements made much of the fact that it was a ‘Panorama with Motion’. It reappeared for several weeks at Bath on 23 November 1797; a revised show appeared at Ipswich in June 1798, with the subject changed to portray Admiral Duncan’s victory over the Dutch fleet at the Battle of Camperdown; it then reinvented itself again to a ‘Panorama with Motion’ of the Battle of the Nile, exhibiting at Edinburgh (March 1800), Manchester (June 1800), Newcastle (October 1800), Hull (October 1800), Leeds (October 1800), Derby (March 1801), and Reading (May 1801).²⁵ Given the sparseness of provincial newspaper coverage at this time, it seems likely that this exhibition visited many other towns and cities. Its three key features — its moving image, its movability, and the ability to quickly change its scenes in response to events — would all be key characteristics of the touring/moving panorama during the nineteenth century.

There were occasional visits from panoramas to the south-west in the early years of the nineteenth century (Plymouth, its garrisons swollen and strategic naval importance enhanced due to the Napoleonic Wars, was visited by two as early as September 1802; Exeter had to wait until July 1816 for the first visit of a moving panorama).²⁶ However, it is from around 1822 that touring panoramas became a regular presence in the entertainment landscape of the region. These early exhibitions reveal both its novelty and its still embryonic exhibition practices. Even the question

²⁴ ‘The Panorama’, *BC*, 13 April 1797, p. 3.

²⁵ ‘Panorama with Motion’, *BC*, 23 November 1797, p. 3; ‘Panorama in Motion’, *Ipswich Journal*, 17 June 1798, p. 3; ‘Panorama with Motion’, *Caledonian Mercury*, 27 March 1800, p. 1; ‘Panorama with Motion’, *Manchester Mercury*, 3 June 1800, p. 1; ‘Panorama’, *Newcastle Courant*, 9 August 1800, p. 1; ‘Panorama With Motion’, *Hull Packet*, 21 October 1800, p. 2; ‘Exhibition Now Open’, *Leeds Intelligencer*, 28 October 1800, p. 3; ‘Panorama, with Motion’, *Reading Mercury*, 18 May 1801, p. 3.

²⁶ ‘Panorama’, *TEFP*, 9 September 1802, p. 1; ‘Panorama’, *TEFP*, 7 October 1802, p. 1.

of what exactly a panorama was remained an open one for audiences and showmen alike. When G. Barker and Wright's show visited Bristol, Exeter, and Plymouth in February, April, and May 1822, their 'panorama' of the coronation of George IV was, in fact, no more than three large, separate, painted tableaux.²⁷ In Bristol, Barker and Wright exhibited at the genteel Assembly Rooms, Princes Street, the venue used by most visiting panoramas; in Exeter, they exhibited at the Royal Circus building, near the new Public Subscription rooms (which had only been opened in 1820); at Plymouth, the show was at Harris's Amphitheatre, Plymouth Dock, another venue used predominantly by circuses.²⁸ Travelling circuses often built quasi-permanent venues for long residencies during the winter months, sometimes leaving them standing for subsequent exhibitors to use. Barker and Wright's employment of two such exemplifies the way panoramas followed the touring patterns being used by other popular shows.

Barker and Wright's opportunistic attempt to exploit the novelty of the panorama seems to have been a less than wholehearted success. Their runs were relatively short and, when Messrs Marshall's panorama arrived in Exeter the following year, they felt it necessary to advertise that it had no connection with the previous year's exhibition.²⁹ It was with the arrival of Messrs Marshall in the south-west in 1822 that touring panoramas became a significant part of the local entertainment landscape. Crucially, Marshall's and subsequent exhibitors conducted their enterprise on a regional scale, travelling with several panoramas at the same time and exhibiting them simultaneously in a number of related locations. The practical difficulties of transporting something as large as a panorama at this time meant that this exhibition model made logistic and commercial sense. And while these panoramas drew on practices used by the increasing number of touring shows, their business model was distinct in that, given the financial outlay required to produce a single panorama, running several shows simultaneously gave showmen an opportunity to lower their overheads. Profits could be ploughed back into producing new shows, while the stock of existing panoramas could be carried with them and toured in nearby locations for as long as a canvas was in a fit condition to be exhibited.

²⁷ 'Oracle of Fashion', *BM*, 23 February 1822, p. 2; 'G. Barker's and Wright's Panorama', *The Alfred*, 23 April 1822, p. 1.

²⁸ 'Plymouth Chronicle', *The Alfred*, 7 May 1822, p. 3.

²⁹ 'Panorama of the Battles of Ligny, Les Quatre Bras and Waterloo', *TEFP*, 23 February 1823, p. 3.

Messrs Marshall consisted of Peter Marshall and his son, William, two showman-painters from Edinburgh: their touring shows were key to the national development of the panorama industry. Huhtamo has demonstrated that it was due to Marshall's, along with other exhibitors such as J. B. Laidlaw, M. Daguire, and G. Barker, that panoramas began to be extensively toured across Britain from the early 1820s. Their panoramas were often described as 'peristrepthic', a term first used in 1815 by Messrs Marshall, to describe a show consisting of their panoramas of the River Clyde and the Cape of Good Hope.³⁰ 'Peristrepthic' signified a large, convex, semicircular panorama, made up of a series of tableaux that could be presented one after the other in a narrative succession: it was a neologism intended to distinguish their shows from the 360° panorama. Peter Marshall's first show was in 1809 in Edinburgh, subsequently moving to 18 Old Bond Street, London in February 1810. It consisted of 'Two Grand Moveable Panoramas', one a journey down 100 miles of the Clyde, together with a second of 'Views of the City and Port of Glasgow'.³¹ Marshall was certainly touring his panoramas during autumn 1812 and through 1813, exhibiting at Cheltenham, Manchester, Liverpool, and probably numerous other unrecorded locations.³² Huhtamo has argued that while Messrs Marshall were significant exhibitors in London, and indeed occupied the Great Room in Spring Gardens, more or less continuously between 1823 and 1826, it is their commitment to provincial exhibition that defined their success.

From early September 1822, Bristol Assembly Rooms hosted Marshall's peristrepthic panorama of 'the Battles of Les Quatre Bras, Ligny and Waterloo'. It consisted of twelve tableaux and the advertisements proclaimed that 'the spectator may fancy himself engaged in the scenes before him'.³³ Boxes cost 2s.; tickets for the gallery were 1s. These prices were certainly expensive, befitting the elegance of the Assembly Rooms, and would have precluded many from attending. Nonetheless, they are comparable to the prices charged by larger touring shows such as circuses and menageries. At Bristol Fair in 1820, the Royal Circus cost 2s. for boxes, 1s. for the pit, and 6d. for the circle or standing places; a visit to

³⁰ Erkki Huhtamo, 'Penetrating the Peristrepthic: An Unwritten Chapter in the History of the Panorama', *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 6 (2008), 219–38 (p. 220).

³¹ Huhtamo, 'Penetrating the Peristrepthic', p. 220; 'Two Grand Moveable Panoramas', *Morning Post*, 10 February 1810, p. 1.

³² 'Theatre', *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 20 August 1812, p. 3; 'Mr Marshall's', *Manchester Mercury*, 28 December 1813, p. 1.

³³ 'Assembly Rooms', *BM*, 7 April 1823, p. 2.

Wombwell's menagerie at this time similarly cost 2s. for 'Ladies and Gentlemen' and 1s. for 'Tradespeople and Others'.³⁴ Marshall's exhibited six times daily: thrice during the day and thrice during the evening. During each showing, which lasted around an hour, a full military band played patriotic music. Such set times contrast with the Leicester Square rotunda that was open from 10 a.m. until dusk. Its showing was continuous: visitors entered and viewed their way round its gigantic scene at their own pace and pleasure. Spectating was mobile, genteel, and individualized. In contrast, moving panoramas had set performance times, necessitated by the audience needing to follow the sequential, narrative movement of the tableaux: they were 'shows' rather than 'showings', a performance rather than an exhibition, involving a correspondingly different mode of attention and communal experience. Audience experience was collective not simply in terms of being undertaken with large numbers but through attention being always simultaneously focused on the same scene. Tellingly, Marshall's proclaimed its 1822 Bristol panorama to be of 'an entirely novel construction' and '*not the one from Leicester Square*', suggesting that there was still a need to create audience knowledge about their own novel format.³⁵

At least six hundred people were visiting Marshall's show daily in Bristol in September 1822.³⁶ Visitor figures were swollen because of Bristol fair, which always opened on 1 September, and the number of daily shows was increased accordingly. Most early panorama exhibitions in Bristol coincided with the large annual St James's fair, which was often attacked for its carnivalesque riot and which was eventually shut down by the corporation in 1837. Touring panoramas might have been in residence at the genteel Assembly Rooms, but the timing of their visits and their close proximity to the fair, no more than a five-minute walk away, not only associates them with its crowded amusements but underscores their reliance on the traditional rhythms and spaces of local entertainment. The relative absence of other popular exhibitions meant that the local fair remained a major source of entertainment. Panorama exhibitions in Exeter and Plymouth similarly often coincided with their respective Easter and November fairs: these panoramas were part of the fair-as-event even though they were not *of* it. In Exeter, for example, Easter 1823 saw Marshall's Wa-

³⁴ 'Royal Circus', *BM*, 4 September 1820, p. 2; 'Wombwells' Royal National Menagerie', *Norfolk Chronicle*, 17 April 1824, p. 2.

³⁵ 'Panorama', *BM*, 22 September 1822, p. 2.

³⁶ 'Oracle of Fashion', *BM*, 9 September 1822, p. 2.

terloo panorama in residence; while for Easter 1834, Monsieur Daguire's Grand Revolving Panorama of the siege of the City of Antwerp, together with the Battle of Navarino, was exhibited at the Royal Subscription Rooms.³⁷ The same panorama had been exhibited at the Freemason's Hall, Plymouth, for the duration of Plymouth fair the previous November; while Daguire also exhibited panoramas coinciding with Bristol fair in September 1830 (Lord Exmouth's Bombardment of Algiers and the Battle of Navarino) and Plymouth fair in November 1831 (of the French July 1830 Revolution).³⁸ Smaller country fairs also seem to have received panoramas, albeit their 'panoramic' quality may simply have consisted of being extremely large tableaux; the plenitude of exhibition spaces panoramas could be found at is testimony to their extensive exhibition. At Ottery St Mary fair in June 1830, a small town around ten miles east of Exeter, there was a panorama of the gruesome murder of Maria Marten by Cordner, which the *Western Times* wished to be suppressed for pandering to 'the worst propensities of our nature'.³⁹

Marshall's Waterloo panorama exhibited in Bristol for seven weeks from 1 September 1822 before going onto the new Masonic Hall, Bath at the end of October and staying there until 16 January 1823, when it was replaced by a short run of Marshall's Arctic panorama based on Franklin and Ross's expedition to explore the North Pole.⁴⁰ The arrival of the latter canvas in Bath was delayed 'owing to the canals being impassable', suggesting a preference for maritime over road transportation.⁴¹ At Bristol and Bath, Marshall's Waterloo panorama was reputedly visited by 22,600 and 22,000 people respectively.⁴² *Figures 1* and *2* (at the end of this article) demonstrate the scope of Marshall's enterprise between 1822 and 1824 when they were in residence at various locations across the south-west;

³⁷ 'Panorama', *EPG*, 29 March 1834, p. 3.

³⁸ 'Moving Panorama of the City of Antwerp', *Plymouth and Plymouth Dock Weekly Journal*, 2 November 1833, p. 3; see also 'Freemason's Hall, Cornwall Street, Plymouth', *Plymouth and Plymouth Dock Weekly Journal*, 2 November 1831, p. 2. Other examples include Prout's Theatre of Arts in November 1823.

³⁹ 'On Tuesday', *Western Times*, 12 June 1820, p. 2.

⁴⁰ 'Panorama', *BC*, 31 October 1822, p. 2; 'Panorama of Waterloo', *BC*, 16 January 1823, p. 3.

⁴¹ 'Panorama of Waterloo', *BC*, 16 January 1823, p. 3. Advertisements declared that the panorama was soon to go to Copenhagen, as the Prince and Princess of Denmark had been so impressed with it when they had seen it at Cheltenham, they had requested it to visit their homeland.

⁴² 'Panorama of the Battles of Ligny, Les Quatre Bras and Waterloo', *TEFP*, 23 February 1823, p. 3.

they show a well-developed commercial model for touring panoramas. It is a model founded on slowly working your way across a region through long, extended runs, sometimes through the simultaneous exhibition of multiple panoramas in nearby locations. Canvases were transferred between venues in order to attract repeat visitors and keep the show novel. This change of programme ensured longer runs, mitigating the need for frequent changes of location and the erection of temporary buildings, thereby reducing one of the most significant overheads for such large-scale shows. In the 1820s, the commercial and geographic scale of Marshall's makes them unprecedented: mapping their exhibition network across a region demonstrates that they were much more organized and extensive exhibitors than has hitherto been realized. They are probably the earliest example of large-format picture-going being turned into a regularly available local activity.

Come early April 1823, Marshall's were back at Bristol Assembly Rooms with a new show, their Arctic panorama.⁴³ Exhibiting at 9 Prince's Street opposite was a linked Museum of Natural and Artificial Curiosities, consisting of artefacts from indigenous Arctic peoples as well as many natural history specimens. The *Bristol Mercury* urged local inhabitants to attend in terms that emphasize the artistic status proclaimed by most panoramas: 'if they neglect it under the impression that it is merely a *show*, they will lose the gratification of seeing a representation of one of the most sublime and awful scenes in nature; a source of equal instruction and amusement.'⁴⁴ The Arctic exhibition remained open until 16 June 1823. Immediately following was a double bill of Marshall's Battle of Genappe, Views of St Helena, and the Funeral Procession of Napoleon Bonaparte, together with a second panorama of the 'ever-memorable' Battle of Trafalgar and the Death of Lord Nelson.⁴⁵ The occasion of the fair again resulted in extended opening hours with Marshall's not closing until 7 November, when these particular panoramas moved to Edinburgh. Five days later, however, they recommenced exhibiting at Bath with a panorama of the Bombardment of Algiers.⁴⁶ Closing in mid-February 1824, it was quickly replaced by Marshall's panorama of the coronation of

⁴³ 'Assembly Rooms', *BM*, 7 April 1823, p. 2.

⁴⁴ 'Oracle of Fashion', *BM*, 16 June 1823, p. 2.

⁴⁵ 'Panoramas', *BM*, 21 July 1823, p. 2.

⁴⁶ 'Algiers', *BC*, 13 November 1823, p. 2.

George IV, which enjoyed a one-month run. Marshall's were in almost continuous residence in Bath for four and a half months.⁴⁷

At the same time as Marshall's were in Bath, they began exhibiting their coronation panorama at the Bristol Assembly Rooms from 15 December 1823.⁴⁸ It stayed there for seven weeks until 7 February 1824, before transferring to Bath.⁴⁹ Canvases did not only transfer between Bristol and Bath though; Marshall's used Bristol as a hub to branch down into Devon. Thus, on 2 March 1823, Marshall's Waterloo panorama began exhibiting at the Royal Circus building, Exeter.⁵⁰ When its seven-week run closed on 26 April, the Waterloo panorama moved to Plymouth where it was exhibited from 5 May until 9 August, a run of just over three months. They began their run at a temporary building near Plymouth Dock that had been recently vacated by Thiodon's Theatre of Arts, another touring show whose *raison d'être* was scenographic spectacle.⁵¹ At the same time as the Plymouth exhibition was running, Marshall's reopened in Exeter with the Polar Regions canvas from 5 July, finally closing just after mid-August.⁵² Through July and August 1823, Marshall's were exhibiting simultaneously at Exeter, Bristol, and Plymouth. Thus, the overall picture is that between September 1822 and February 1824, Marshall's were *in situ* at Bristol Assembly Rooms for long periods while also exhibiting at Bath, Exeter, and Plymouth. Their panoramas criss-crossed the region, reaching a significant proportion of its population.

The scale of Marshall's enterprise is even more notable if their concurrent activities beyond the region are taken into account. From December to May 1823, their Waterloo panorama, having finished its south-west exhibition, was at Spring Gardens, London. During these months, Marshall's were usually exhibiting in at least two south-west venues. When individual panoramas had exhausted their appeal, they were also busy rotating them out of the region onto the next series of venues. Thus, after the Arctic Regions panorama had been exhibited at Bristol, Bath, and

⁴⁷ 'Last Week but One', *BC*, 4 February 1823, p. 2; 'Panorama of the Coronation', *BC*, 2 March 1823, p. 2.

⁴⁸ 'Panorama', *BM*, 15 December 1823, p. 2.

⁴⁹ 'Positively the Last Week', *BM*, 2 February 1824, p. 3.

⁵⁰ 'Panorama of the Battles of Ligny, Les Quatre Bras and Waterloo', *TEFP*, 27 February 1823, p. 4.

⁵¹ 'Panorama of the Battles of Ligny, Les Quatre Bras and Waterloo', *Plymouth and Plymouth Dock Weekly Journal*, 1 May 1823, p. 1.

⁵² 'Exeter', *TEFP*, 11 April 1823, p. 4; 'Panorama of the Frozen Regions', *TEFP*, 3 July 1823, p. 4; 'Panorama', *TEFP*, 14 August 1823, p. 1.

Exeter, closing in Bristol in mid-June 1823, by 13 November 1823 it reappeared at Theatre Royal, Worcester, now relabelled as a Kiorama, and then at Salisbury Assembly Rooms in May 1824.⁵³ The exhibition at Salisbury was part of Marshall's moving eastwards in that the Arctic panorama followed immediately after the exhibition of the Bombardment of Algiers in the same venue from 9 April to 5 May 1824.⁵⁴ This had previously been exhibited at Bath (and before that at Worcester Theatre Royal for five weeks from 25 September to 1 November 1823), but would not appear at Bristol until September 1824, thus *after* its exhibition at Worcester, Bath, Salisbury, and probably other unrecorded places in-between.⁵⁵ The extensive rotation and concurrent exhibition of Marshall's canvases embodies the remarkable commercial scale and logistical complexity of their operation. They were anything but solitary artist-exhibitors.

Marshall's 1822 to 1824 exhibitions were both their most significant visit to the south-west and the most extensive provision of panoramas in the region during this period. There were subsequent visits but they were more intermittent: the aforementioned panorama of the Bombardment of Algiers appeared at Bristol Assembly Rooms on 4 September 1824 in time for the fair, staying for five weeks, while another familiar subject, the Grand Peristrepthic Panorama of the Battle of Navarino, together with the City of Constantinople, was exhibited in 1829.⁵⁶ Peter Marshall died in 1826 and thereafter Marshall's touring activities were curtailed in favour of more permanent exhibitions in Edinburgh (Huhtamo, 'Penetrating the Peristrepthic', p. 220). Other panoramas continued to visit the south-west regularly, however, often following similar rhythms to those of Messrs Marshall. 1829, for example, was exceptional in that there were two panoramas exhibited during Bristol fair: Marshall's was joined by Sinclair and Co.'s Grand Panorama of the Battle of Navarino, together with Views of the Struggle for Greek Independence. Exhibited in a temporary building at St James's churchyard, the site of the fair, Sinclair's show likely had little of the gentility of assembly rooms but its portable building could offer tickets at half of the price of the former, with boxes at 1s. and other tickets

⁵³ 'Peristrepthic (or Moving) Panorama of the Frozen Regions', *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 10 May 1824, p. 4.

⁵⁴ 'Grand Peristrepthic Panorama', *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 26 April 1824, p. 4; 'Kiorama', *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 6 November 1823, p. 3.

⁵⁵ 'The Panorama of the Battle of Algiers', *Worcester Journal*, 11 September 1823, p. 3.

⁵⁶ 'Battle of Algiers', *BM*, 6 September 1824, p. 1; 'Panorama', *BM*, 11 October 1824, p. 2.

at 6d. To take further advantage of the crowds, Sinclair's panorama, unlike Marshall's, was on continuous exhibition from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m.; audiences presumably entered the show at whatever point it had reached and could view it in a continuous loop.⁵⁷ Daguire, like Marshall's, seems to have toured with multiple panoramas; while exhibiting his French Revolution canvas during November 1831 at the Freemason's Hall, Plymouth, he began exhibiting his Panorama of the Bombardment of Algiers at the Devonport Public Rooms, Plymouth (before switching the Algiers canvas to the Devonport Public Rooms, where it stayed until after the lucrative Christmas period).⁵⁸

Messrs Marshall's withdrawal from touring created an absence that was partly filled by J. B. Laidlaw in the early 1830s. Huhtamo has noted that evidence points to Laidlaw being originally part of Messrs Marshall's, an argument backed up by the fact that when Laidlaw exhibited in Bristol at the Assembly Rooms under his own name for the first time in late August 1834, the *Bristol Mercury* noted that he was the same person who had exhibited Marshall's Waterloo panorama there in 1822 (also providing further evidence of the almost corporate nature of Marshall's enterprise).⁵⁹ Indeed, Laidlaw's first peristrepthic show was an eclectic mix of Marshall's previous successes, or perhaps simply consisted of all the canvases that were still fit to be exhibited, containing as it did scenes of Captain Ross's Voyages, the Interior of the Citadel of Antwerp, the Burning of *HMS Kent* in the Bay of Biscay, the Battle of Navarino, and the City of Constantinople.

Laidlaw's panoramas repeat the extended runs of Messrs Marshall, emphasizing the latter's importance in setting exhibition norms; his longest stay in the south-west was a nine-month residency between 1837 and 1838. Laidlaw arrived in Bristol with an exhibition of a Panorama of the Bay and City of New York on 8 December 1838. It was exhibited in a new building erected in Bridewell Lane and had a ticket pricing structure akin

⁵⁷ 'During the Fair', *BM*, 8 September 1829, p. 2.

⁵⁸ 'Now Exhibiting at the Freemason's Hall, Cornwall Street', *Plymouth and Plymouth Dock Weekly Journal*, 6 December 1831, p. 3.

⁵⁹ Huhtamo, *Illusions in Motion*, p. 87, n. 27. Huhtamo notes that the *New Monthly Magazine* (January–June 1818, p. 83) announced the marriage (in Manchester) of Mr J. B. Laidlaw from Leeds with Catherine, the only daughter of Peter Marshall from Edinburgh. He also notes that J. B. Laidlaw, a printer based at 5 Spring Gardens, was responsible for a broadside for Marshall's Grand Historical Peristrepthic Panorama of the Coronation [1823]. See also 'Captain Ross', *BM*, 30 August 1834, p. 3.

to that of other portable theatres: boxes 2s., pit 1s., gallery 6d.⁶⁰ One key advantage of having your own exhibition space, even a temporary one, was the ability to accommodate more spectators at lower prices. John Richardson's portable theatre at Bartholomew Fair in 1826 held around 1,500 people, and when Richard Sand's American Circus arrived in Plymouth in 1843, its portable amphitheatre claimed it could hold 2,500 people, with 1,000 accommodated in 'Portable seats, neatly carpeted and tastefully decorated'.⁶¹ As with Sinclair's panorama at Bristol fair in 1829, Laidlaw's 6d. gallery tickets are thus half the price usually charged for panoramas at the Assembly Rooms, or indeed other large exhibitions (albeit the gallery was likely to have been as rudimentary as standing room behind the area designated as the pit). These lower prices would have provided significant impetus to the popular make-up of its audience. Equally telling is that, in the last stages of his run, one Laidlaw advertisement was addressed specifically to the 'Ladies of Bristol and its vicinities', suggesting that women formed a significant portion of his audience, particularly for the daytime exhibitions.⁶²

Moving panoramas during the 1820s and 1830s introduced not simply a new type of visual show but a new scale and organization of touring show. The New York panorama remained *in situ* until 3 March 1839, a run of just under three months, but it was immediately replaced by a panorama of Kolkata. This was itself soon supplemented by an additional panorama of scenes of Queen Victoria's coronation, while, from the end of June, Kolkata was replaced by a new Scripture Panorama of the City of Jerusalem, albeit still in tandem with the coronation.⁶³ Replicating Marshall's earlier long stay in Bristol, it was not until 14 September 1839 that Laidlaw finally closed, moving his operation to Birmingham, where the New York panorama had been exhibiting since late June.

Laidlaw followed Marshall's regional exhibition model by exhibiting several shows simultaneously. As with Marshall's, Bristol acted as a regional hub during Laidlaw's long nine-month sojourn. On 9 February 1839, Laidlaw's began a run at the Swan Tavern, Exeter, exhibiting his peristrepic panoramas of Jerusalem, Queen Victoria's coronation and Captain Ross's Voyages, as well as a view of Fieschi's attempted assassination of King Louis-Philippe.⁶⁴ From 25 March, the panorama of Kolkata

⁶⁰ 'Panorama', *BM*, 15 December 1838, p. 3.

⁶¹ Harrop, p. 4; 'Richard Sand's American Circus', *PDWJ*, 29 June 1843, p. 2.

⁶² 'Last Week of the Panorama', *BM*, 8 November 1834, p. 3.

⁶³ 'Panorama', *BM*, 10 August 1839, p. 3.

⁶⁴ 'For Three Weeks Only', *EPG*, 9 February 1839, p. 2.

was exhibited, before closing on 7 April as it was going to be shown in Bristol. Mapping the broader exhibition of Laidlaw's panoramas prior to their Bristol arrival demonstrates that his enterprise was conducted on a regional scale as it slowly moved across the nation; his panoramas had previously been exhibited at Manchester in a temporary building from early May 1837 to mid-November 1837.⁶⁵ He subsequently moved to simultaneous exhibitions in Liverpool and Dublin, opening with a double bill of the Jerusalem panorama and Captain Ross's Voyages at Liverpool from 9 December 1837, and at the Circus building at Lower Abbey Street, Dublin, on 30 December. The Liverpool exhibition closed on 5 May 1838 and that in Dublin in early November 1838: Laidlaw opened in Bristol around five weeks later.⁶⁶ So, just as exhibitions in Bristol and Exeter took place simultaneously, Laidlaw's panoramas in Liverpool and Dublin worked in tandem, creating their own miniature exhibition chain. Moreover, the maritime transportation of panoramas (Liverpool–Dublin–Bristol) highlights a touring network shaped by the difficulty of transporting such large-scale shows by road. (In 1843, it took the New Royal Equestrian Circus eight days to travel from Southampton to Plymouth, causing them 'considerable loss'.)⁶⁷

Bristol, Exeter, and Plymouth regularly hosted panoramas from the early 1820s. To what extent though did shows reach beyond these larger cities? Just how widespread was their exhibition? Evidence suggests that there was at least intermittent exhibition in small towns, albeit these locations probably functioned as a useful stop-off on the way to somewhere larger. There are often unexplained gaps in the performance history of individual panoramas, which might well be due to their being shown in locales not large enough to have a newspaper. While Marshall's, for example, do not seem to have visited Cornwall, one show that did visit Truro in 1832 was Daguire's Revolving Dioramic Panorama of the French Revolution and Bombardment of Algiers.⁶⁸ Cornwall was a hotbed of Methodism at this time, and his advertisements made a special play of its respectability to religious groups:

⁶⁵ 'Panorama', *Manchester Times*, 7 May 1837, p. 1; 'Panorama', *Manchester Times*, 4 November 1837, p. 1.

⁶⁶ On the Dublin exhibition, see 'Panorama of New York', *Freeman's Journal*, 30 December 1837, p. 2; 'The Panorama', *Freeman's Journal*, 29 October 1838, p. 1.

⁶⁷ 'New Royal Equestrian Circus', *PDWJ*, 12 October 1843, p. 3.

⁶⁸ 'Mons. P Daguire', *RCG*, 10 March 1832, p. 3.

The religious scruples against visiting Exhibitions are laid aside in case of Panoramas, the subject being founded upon facts, and are particularly patronized by Clergymen, Seminaries, Academies, and all Religious Classes of Society.⁶⁹

Daguire's proclamation was not repeated in advertisements at other locations and was likely a local ploy rather than a generalized principle. Another show, a Panorama of the Siege of Algiers, left Exeter around 13 October 1827, before resurfacing, at the beginning of December 1827, at Barnstaple Assembly Rooms in north Devon, an area characterized by its remoteness and poor road links.⁷⁰ Where had this canvas been exhibited in the intervening six weeks? To add to the complexity, while the scenes and advertisements precisely replicate those of Marshall's previously exhibited Algiers panorama, Marshall's name is not mentioned on the handbill and the *North Devon Journal* describes the Exeter visit as being by Barker's panorama.⁷¹ It is possible that Marshall's canvas, already exhaustively exhibited, may have been sold on to Barker to tour more remote areas and smaller towns. Barnstaple's population was only 16,245, but the Algiers panorama (with the Battle of Navarino added on for good measure) exhibited throughout December 1827: it reopened on 4 February 1828 at a nearby town, Bideford, for a few days.⁷² It subsequently moved back to Barnstaple towards the end of February 1828 for a second short run, even exhibiting in the even smaller but fashionable coastal town of Ilfracombe, (population 2,622 in 1831) for around three weeks in April 1828, before travelling on to Plymouth.⁷³ Was this north Devon tour principally a temperate place to winter much as a circus ceased touring during these months? Was Barker there only because Bideford was easily accessible by sea? Answers to these questions are tentative but the presence of the moving panorama in north Devon in 1827 and 1828 suggests that they reached well beyond larger urban centres, and that small towns were visited, often leaving little historical trace, as part of larger regional networks.

⁶⁹ 'Panorama', *RCG*, 10 March 1832, p. 3.

⁷⁰ 'Moving Panorama of the Bombardment of Algiers', *NDJ*, 6 December 1827, p. 1.

⁷¹ 'Exeter', *NDJ*, 3 August 1827, p. 3.

⁷² 'Panorama of the Battles of Navarino and Algiers', *NDJ*, 31 January 1828, p. 1.

⁷³ 'Panorama', *NDJ*, 6 March 1828, p. 1; 'Ilfracombe', *NDJ*, 17 April 1828, p. 2.

Local and global in the moving panorama

Most touring panoramas and dioramas depicted major national, global, and imperial events. An element of reportage was often augmented by the comforting appeal of a patriotic spectacle celebrating British naval and military victories as well as events such as the coronation of George IV. Trafalgar, Waterloo, the Battle of Navarino, the Bombardment of Algiers: these were helped to become part of popular memory through their panoramic replaying (aided by the appropriate music accompanying each individual tableaux, usually played by a military band). With the pervasive promotion of panoramas and dioramas as offering an experience of 'being-there', local audiences had the opportunity of a vicarious participation in the event. Their pleasure was not just from a sensory immersion in the scene, which has tended to be the aspect most focused upon by existing scholarship. Panoramic hyperrealism was never simply for-itself. The success of touring panoramas and dioramas was their ability to give audiences up and down the country a sense of belonging to their own nation. At a time when there was greater realization of the way far-off events were impinging on individual lives, the resultant sense of insecurity could be partially offset by the familiarity gained by the panoramic experience of 'being-there'.

Panoramas may have been touring shows replaying major national events but their extended runs and special buildings often embedded them firmly in the community. The most successful were those that specifically orientated themselves around, and integrated themselves into, local identities and concerns, often through astute strategies on the part of the showman. These could range from the relatively straightforward, such as securing the patronage of local dignitaries or providing local schools with discounted showings, to a range of more sophisticated tactics. Such strategies are part of the way that the panorama inserted the events they depicted into everyday life: the more 'national' events depicted by most panoramas could be connected to local concerns, the greater their impact in making that local audience feel part of the imagined community of the nation. This section focuses on a number of particularly successful panoramas to argue that their success stemmed from integrating themselves into the local community.

My earliest example helps to explain the incredibly long and successful run enjoyed by Laidlaw's panoramas in Bristol. The foundation of his success was the first panorama he exhibited, of the Bay and City of New York. Laidlaw gave this panorama, which was not exhibited in either

Exeter or Plymouth, a local significance by cleverly connecting it to the recent launch of the *SS Great Western*. Designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel as a transatlantic steamer and largely built in Bristol, it was part of a projected Bristol–New York route, which would provide an integrated transport route to London by linking with the Great Western Railway, the line for which was then under construction. The *SS Great Western* had departed for its maiden Bristol–New York voyage just over seven months previously on 8 April 1838; it arrived on 23 April, the speed of its crossing an engineering triumph. Laidlaw played on this new-found closeness with New York. A letter from three staff on the *SS Great Western*, all of whom were New York residents, was one of several communications published in the *Bristol Mercury* testifying to the panorama’s veracity.⁷⁴ They congratulated Laidlaw on exhibiting a scene now ‘so interesting to Great Britain by the introduction of steam vessels, but particularly so to the inhabitants of Bristol, from the frequent and quick passages made by the *Great Western*’.⁷⁵ This letter, as with others published, is suspiciously on message and may well have been a puff.

Upon the return of the *SS Great Western* from New York in February 1839, Laidlaw celebrated by giving all receipts from the day to Bristol Infirmary, together with a five pound donation by himself, and announced he would subsequently provide free admission to all British charity schools ‘in order to hand down to posterity that the Great Western was one wonder of the world, and LAIDLAW’S PANORAMA OF NEW YORK another’.⁷⁶ In associating his panorama so strongly with Bristol’s civic pride and industrial progress, Laidlaw makes the panorama part of local culture rather than another touring show; yet the result is not parochial but rather the assimilation of New York into the daily lives of the city’s inhabitants. By the end of March, upwards of three thousand children had reputedly seen the picture for free.⁷⁷ The New York panorama finally closed on 3 May 1839, a run of just under five months, and was replaced by that of Kolkata, replete with romantic orientalism and the procession of an Eastern prince with his mounted elephants.⁷⁸ As a traditional mode of transport, the elephants provide a telling contrast with both the modernity of the *SS Great Western* and the mobility achieved by the

⁷⁴ ‘Panorama of New York’, *BM*, 2 March 1839, p. 3.

⁷⁵ ‘To Mr Laidlaw’, *BM*, 12 January 1839, p. 3.

⁷⁶ ‘Return of the Great Western from New York’, *BM*, 23 February 1839, p. 3.

⁷⁷ ‘Panorama of New York’, *BM*, 30 March 1839, p. 3.

⁷⁸ ‘Panorama’, *BM*, 18 May 1839, p. 2.

panorama itself.⁷⁹ The *Bristol Mercury* was in no doubt that the success of both shows was due to local interest in these far-off locations:

The skill and enterprise of our citizens having brought New York within a fortnight's sail of Bristol, the panorama became at once an object of the most general and intense interest, and was, consequently, visited by thousands; and now that Bristol occupies a more prominent part than she once did with reference to her East Indian trade, the same interest is, or should be, felt with regard to Calcutta, which every citizen now has an opportunity of becoming acquainted with at a trifling charge.⁸⁰

The panoramas of Kolkata and New York contributed to Bristol audiences' sense of their own global locatedness. These far-off cities were now part of the everyday. Such localizing tactics seem to have been a standard part of Laidlaw's showmanship; when previously exhibiting in Dublin, he had similarly advertised the New York painting as 'the doing of an Irish artist'.⁸¹ Moreover, Laidlaw's role as lecturer similarly helped to shape his audience's experiences; he was particularly praised for his interpretative efforts, providing audiences with a narrative that worked to mitigate the grandness of the picture. The *Bristol Mercury* noted that 'the many accidents and upsets in the street (of which you give a most laughable account) take place in all large cities, especially crowded ones'.⁸² Such humorous anecdotes not only enlivened the scene but humanized it: the bustling space of a New York street was turned into a comic moment rather than an alienating cityscape.

A similar show that fused the local and global took place in Plymouth in December 1841, when a grand fashionable fete and ball was staged at Plymouth Theatre Royal, complete with *tableaux vivants* and a moving diorama of the Taranaki area of New Zealand. British sovereignty had only formally been declared over the whole of New Zealand in May 1840, and the ball was staged to commemorate the first anniversary of the first group of emigrants' departure to New Plymouth, a colony in New Zealand populated by inhabitants from Plymouth and the surrounding area. The emigrants had arrived in New Zealand in March 1841, and a second-

⁷⁹ I am grateful to Mary Henes for this point in response to an earlier version of this chapter.

⁸⁰ 'Laidlaw's Panorama of Calcutta', *BM*, 15 June 1839, p. 3.

⁸¹ 'Panorama', *Freeman's Journal*, 30 January 1838, p. 2.

⁸² 'To Mr Laidlaw', *BM*, 12 January 1839, p. 3.

ary aim of the ball was to raise funds to support their endeavour. The event was very much an elite occasion. Patrons included the Duchess of Somerset and Lady John Russell, while the Earl of Devon and the Mayors of Plymouth and Devonport were among the Stewards.⁸³ To partake in the ball and performance, ladies' tickets were 7s. and gentlemen's 8s. 6d.; seats for spectators — who could watch both the diorama and the local gentry from an appropriate distance — were 4s., 3s., and 2s. 6d.⁸⁴

Public interest was such that the event was moved to Plymouth Theatre Royal from the smaller Assembly Rooms: the pit and stage were converted to an enormous ballroom. The diorama was painted by a local artist and theatrical scene painter, Samuel Cook, based on sketches received back from the first settlers. Among the dioramic scenes were pictures of the colony of New Plymouth, a native village, and houses that the local inhabitants had built for arriving emigrants; it finished with a large moonlit view over Taranaki bay. Other large visual tableaux were exhibited between the quadrilles; these included pictures of missionary settlements, a group of natives and a view of Kororarika, the site at which Queen Victoria's authority over the islands was proclaimed. Dancing and dining went on until 4.30 a.m., and the occasion was a huge success with just over 1,100 people attending (the ball company consisted of 650 and the number of spectators in upper boxes was about 450).⁸⁵ It was so successful that it was repeated two nights later at reduced prices.⁸⁶ Like Laidlaw's panorama of New York, this event fused the local and global at a number of levels. It appealed directly to a local audience through its interest in New Plymouth and the friends and family who had emigrated. Yet its subject matter was obviously intrinsically global, a part of what James Belich has described as the 'settler revolution' of nineteenth-century Anglo migration to Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and America.⁸⁷

The far-off subject matter of New Zealand is further balanced by the fact that the diorama was produced by a Plymouth artist. Cook was a jobbing painter out of necessity, but was also a talented watercolourist who, partly due to the relative poverty of his family background, had to support himself through work as a scene painter and as a general decora-

⁸³ 'A Ball', *PDWJ*, 25 November 1841, p. 2.

⁸⁴ 'New Zealand Fete', *PDWJ*, 2 December 1841, p. 2.

⁸⁵ 'New Zealand Fete and Grand Ball', *PDWJ*, 23 December 1841, p. 2.

⁸⁶ 'Second Grand Ball', *PDWJ*, 23 December 1841, p. 3.

⁸⁷ James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783–1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

tor (he had helped to renovate and redecorate Plymouth Theatre Royal in 1839 for example).⁸⁸ Opportunities for local artists were limited and the panorama was one obvious way to remuneratively showcase his talents. Cook went on to paint other panoramas for regional exhibition. This local production exemplifies the rhizome-like proliferation of panoramas; it did not spread in a hierarchical, centrifugal fashion from London. In 1843, for example, Cook painted 'Scenes of the War in Afghanistan' which began its exhibition at Central Hall, Plymouth. It was 15,000 square feet of canvas and the audience were admitted four times a day for one shilling.⁸⁹ The 1839–42 Anglo-Afghan War, in which British and Indian forces invaded Afghanistan to counter fears of Russian influence, included the massacre of General Elphinstone's army upon its retreat from Kabul. Only one British officer made it to Jalalabad. While it is difficult to discern how graphically Cook depicted this military disaster, one tableaux was advertised as the 'scene of the Fearful Massacre of the British Army in its Retreat from Cabul'. The *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* similarly drew attention to his 'splendid and faithful representation of those far-famed scenes at once of awful disaster and of triumphant valour and success'.⁹⁰ While the global free-trade mobility promoted by the panorama might offer the prospect of a disembodied, frictionless journey of the kind enjoyed by Mr Booley, shows could not ignore the traumatic conflicts and struggle through which British interests were secured or lost.

Cook's Afghanistan panorama seems to have begun as a speculative venture and to have been more successful than anticipated. Partway through the run, it was announced that 'EXTENSIVE ALTERATIONS and IMPROVEMENTS' had been made in the machinery, and 'a spacious and convenient Gallery erected by which a large number of persons can be conveniently accommodated'. From Plymouth, it went on to Truro Assembly Rooms, before heading through Cornwall, calling at Helston and Penzance.⁹¹ With larger touring shows only occasionally travelling as far as Cornwall, regionally based exhibitors could take advantage and exhibit in those spaces that were peripheral to standard touring routes. Local exhibitors enabled the exhibition of panoramas and dioramas in smaller towns and more remote areas. Few environs were missed and the regional exhibition of Cook's Afghanistan canvas is telling.

⁸⁸ 'Theatre Royal, Plymouth', *PDWJ*, 28 September 1839, p. 2.

⁸⁹ 'The Splendid Panorama', *PDWJ*, 16 March 1843, p. 2.

⁹⁰ Untitled, *Salisbury and Winchester Gazette*, 22 February 1844, p. 4.

⁹¹ 'Assembly Rooms, Truro', *RCG*, 21 April 1843, p. 3.

In December 1843, following on from the Cornwall tour, Cook's panorama reappeared at the theatre in Tiverton (a small town around eleven miles north of Exeter), having been taken on tour by Mr Hay, the former lessee of both Exeter and Plymouth Theatre Royal, but now incarnated as a panorama exhibitor as part of his 'Hay at Home' shows (based on Charles Matthew's famed 'At Home').⁹² Subsequently, Hay exhibited in the south-coast towns of Southampton, Exmouth, Chichester, and Weymouth, as well as Exeter and Salisbury and probably other venues.⁹³ Hay was a competent burlesque actor so his treading the boards is not itself remarkable; more telling though is the turn from theatre management to panorama showman. In contrast to the success of Cook's panorama, Plymouth and Exeter theatres both struggled in the early 1840s with poor attendances. In 1841, the *Plymouth and Devonport Weekly Journal* noted that 'the Theatre has exhibited the melancholy spectacle of dispirited, and yet much above respectable, actors, playing to almost empty boxes'.⁹⁴ Hay gave up the Plymouth lease in early 1842; a council meeting noted that the theatre had lost £566 5s. over the previous six years and debated whether it be turned over to other purposes such as a Town Hall or Concert Hall.⁹⁵ Hay's choices exemplify the contrasting fortunes of the panorama and legitimate theatre. For an enterprising impresario, it is telling that in the early 1840s taking a panorama to smaller venues offered more prospects than running two established city theatres. Moreover, Cook's panorama was only one of a number of touring versions exhibiting up and down the country; at Tombland fair in Norwich in 1844, there were no less than four panoramas competing for custom, one of Waterloo and three of the war in Afghanistan and China.⁹⁶

Laidlaw's and Cook's panoramas were far from the only exhibitions that created popular appeal by tapping into the local identity of audiences. Another contemporaneous show, Thiodon's Mechanical and Picturesque Theatre of Arts, both inspired local artists to create their own ver-

⁹² 'Tiverton', *EPG*, 9 December 1843, p. 3; 'Splendid Panorama', *RCG*, 14 April 1843, p. 2.

⁹³ Untitled, *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 9 March 1844, p. 4; 'Exmouth', *Western Times*, 25 November 1843, p. 2; 'Afghanistan', *Western Times*, 11 November 1843, p. 11; 'The Panorama of Afghanistan', *Hampshire Telegraph*, 11 May 1844, p. 4; 'Chichester', *Hampshire Advertiser*, 26 October 1844, p. 8; 'Panorama of Afghanistan', *Western Times*, 14 October 1843, p. 3; 'Mr Hay', *TEFP*, 7 February 1844, p. 2.

⁹⁴ 'The Theatre', *PDWJ*, 4 August 1841, p. 2.

⁹⁵ 'Town Council', *PDWJ*, 5 May 1842, p. 2.

⁹⁶ 'Tombland', *Norfolk Chronicle*, 6 April 1844, p. 2.

sion and offered audiences views of their own locality. Thiodon's was one of a number of touring scenographic-mechanical shows; it was a mixture of scenic spectacle, using techniques developed by De Louthembourg, and all manner of automata, including sixteen trumpets played by machinery. Thiodon's show was thus composed of 'beautiful Representations of celebrated CITIES, LANDSCAPES, SEA and RIVER VIEWS, &C., enlivened by Figures of Persons, Shipping, Carriages, Horses, and Other Aspects, with various aspects of Light and Shade; all the actions and movements representing nature'.⁹⁷ Thiodon initially visited Bristol, Plymouth, and Exeter across 1821 to 1822, and continued to regularly visit the southwest. His exhibition patterns mirror those of panoramas. Thus, come Bristol fair in September 1835 and 1836, he could be found at Bristol Assembly Rooms as part of two long runs in the city. At Easter 1839, when Thiodon's visited Plymouth after a gap of fourteen years, he erected his own theatre in Union Street like some of the other early panoramas; he stayed in residence for over two months until early June (the building was subsequently inhabited by Bromsgrove's performing lions, an example of how such venues were reused). As late as November 1855, Thiodon was returning to Plymouth, presumably to coincide with Plymouth fair.⁹⁸

Thiodon's visits to Bristol in the mid-1830s inspired the two sons of the Bristol marine painter, Joseph Walter, to produce their own version of his dioramic scenes, the *View of Naples* and *The Rising Sun*. They exhibited these during the 1837 September fair with a full band; the *Bristol Mercury* declared that its 'splendour of painting and mechanical ingenuity suffer little in comparison with the original'.⁹⁹ Like Laidlaw, Thiodon was also alive to the potential to connect his show with local audiences whenever possible. Thus, when Thiodon returned to Plymouth in January 1845 for a two-month visit, towards the end of his highly successful run, he paid tribute to his local audience with a new scene of Plymouth Sound and Breakwater; it was enlivened by a number of mechanical, moving boats representing well-known steam packets in the harbour, and ended with a grand display in which 'the Ships of War will salute, and be answered by the battery on the island'.¹⁰⁰ Two years earlier during a Bristol run, Thiodon had similarly advertised that part of his show which portrayed the SS

⁹⁷ 'Thiodon's', *PDWJ*, 30 March 1839, p. 2.

⁹⁸ 'St George's Hall. Stonehouse', *PDWJ*, 8 November 1855, p. 4. Another similar show, Wigglesworth's Theatre of Arts, visited Plymouth in March 1853.

⁹⁹ 'Two Young Men', *BM*, 9 September 1837, p. 3.

¹⁰⁰ 'Thiodon's', *DIPSG*, 3 May 1845, p. 2.

Great Britain in full sail.¹⁰¹ Finished in 1843 but not launched until 1845, the *SS Great Britain* was designed by Brunel and built in Bristol as a sister ship to the *SS Great Western*; it was intended for the same New York route that had been celebrated by Laidlaw's panorama of New York. Taken together, these episodes embody the creative, localized engagement between showman and audience: the two-way nature of this exchange is exemplified in the take-up of Thiodon's techniques by local producers and Thiodon's adaptation of his show to local audiences. Or, to put it another way, communities were happy to appropriate the novelties they desired from the latest visual shows even as the show's own modernity was itself modified by the encounter with those selfsame communities.

The moving panorama was instrumental in the development of an industry of picture-going in the period from 1790 to 1840. The model of a network of touring shows, pioneered by Marshall's in particular, gave panoramas a widespread and sustained exhibition. It is worth noting, moreover, that the moving panorama was only one of several types of large-format visual show that were touring the regions in increasing numbers. This article, for example, has not detailed the panoramas that were included in various pantomimes at Exeter, Bristol, and Plymouth theatres or the numerous dioramas that were also touring (there was a British Diorama at Bristol fair as early as 1825 for example).¹⁰² At a time just prior to the burgeoning spread of cheap newspapers and periodicals, their extensive exhibition meant that the panorama was an important means of connecting local audiences with the global modernity they were living through. And while this study has used the south-west as a case study, the subject matter of the touring shows — the Bombardment of Algiers, New York, the Arctic Regions, the 1830 French Revolution, Waterloo, Kolkata — demonstrates that the identity of the 'region' as well as its inhabitants was being reshaped by the institutional development of the panorama itself and not just by the events its portrayed.

¹⁰¹ 'Launch of the Great Britain', *BM*, 15 July 1843, p. 5.

¹⁰² 'The Diorama', *BM*, 7 November 1825, p. 3.

Fig 1: Marshall's Panorama Exhibitions in the South-West 1822–24				
<i>Panorama</i>	Assembly Rooms, Bristol	Masonic Hall, Bath	Royal Circus, Exeter	Plymouth Dock and Old London Inn Assembly Rooms, Plymouth
<i>Battles of Les Quatre Bras, Ligny and Waterloo</i>	1 September 1822– 18 October 1822	31 October 1822– 14 January 1823	2 March 1823– 26 April 1823	5 May 1823– 9 August 1823 (at Plymouth Dock until 3 July 1823)
<i>Franklin's Expedition to the North Pole</i>	7 April 1823– 16 June 1823	20 January 1823– ?	5 July 1823– 16 August 1823	
<i>Battle of Genappe, Views of St Helena and Funeral Procession of Napoleon Bonaparte</i>	17 June 1823– 7 November 1823	20 May 1824– 24 June 1824 (now trading as W. Barker's)		
<i>Battle of Trafalgar and the Death of Lord Nelson</i>	17 June 1823– 7 November 1823			
<i>Coronation of George IV</i>	15 December 1823– 7 February 1824	1 March 1823– 3 April 1824		
<i>Bombardment of Algiers</i>	3 September 1824– 8 October 1824	13 November 1823– 15 February 1824		

Fig 2: Timeline of Marshall's Panorama Exhibitions in the South-West 1822-24

